

DOMESTIC FOOD ASSISTANCE

AUGUST 11, 1959.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HUMPHREY, from the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 2522]

The Committee on Agriculture and Forestry reported an original bill (S. 2522) to provide for the enrichment and sanitary packaging of certain donated commodities and to establish experimental food stamp allotment programs, with a recommendation that it do pass.

SHORT EXPLANATION

This bill would provide for (i) demonstration food stamp programs in from three to six areas; and (ii) the enrichment and sanitary packaging of corn meal, grits, white rice, and white flour distributed to needy or to schools.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Subcommittee No. 3 of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry held hearings on June 4, 5, and 8 on a number of bills proposing various measures to expand and improve Federal programs of food distribution to the needy in the United States as follows: S. 489, introduced by Senators Cooper, Douglas, Langer, Hennings, Keating, Clark, Bush, Morton, and Scott; S. 585, introduced by Senators Aiken, Young of North Dakota, Humphrey, Anderson, Jackson, Proxmire, and Mansfield; S. 663, introduced by Senators Byrd of West Virginia, Randolph, Green, Jackson, Mansfield, Yarborough, Long, Case of South Dakota, Murray, McCarthy, Capehart, Bartlett, Chavez, Gruening, Langer, Hart, Magnuson, Engle, Young of Ohio, Moss, McGee, Humphrey, Williams of New Jersey, Proxmire, Hennings, and Carroll; S. 862, introduced by Senators Humphrey and Proxmire; S. 1884, introduced by Senators Kennedy, Murray, Byrd of West Virginia, Clark, Cooper, Hart, Humphrey, McGee, McNamara, McCarthy, Morse, Randolph, Yarborough, Young of Ohio, Young of

North Dakota, and Neuberger; and S. 2098, introduced by Senators Humphrey and Symington. Proposals included appropriations for the purchase of diet-balancing foods to supplement the Government-owned surplus foods now being distributed to the unemployed and welfare clients, the establishment of a food stamp plan to improve the diets of needy people, and the comprehensive food allotment plan for low-income families. Several of the bills proposed transfer of the surplus commodity distribution program from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The subcommittee had also held hearings on April 24, 1959, on S. 651, introduced by Senator Johnston of South Carolina, a bill to provide for the enrichment of certain commodities distributed under the National School Lunch Act.

Following the hearings the subcommittee reported to the full committee a clean bill which represented a composite of these proposals. The committee, after considering the bill reported to it by the subcommittee, restricted it to the two matters covered by the bill herewith reported.

EXPLANATION OF THE BILL

The first section of this bill provides it with a short title, "Food Act of 1959."

Title I of the bill requires cornmeal, grits, white rice, and white flour distributed under the direct commodity distribution program pursuant to section 416(3) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, or to schools to be enriched so as to meet the standards for enrichment prescribed by the Food and Drug Administration and to be packaged in sanitary containers not exceeding 50 pounds. At the hearings on S. 651 all witnesses, except the Department of Agriculture, favored enactment of a measure of this sort. Proponents pointed out that various jurisdictions require enrichment and that the 100-pound burlap bags now used are too heavy for the women who prepare the school lunches to handle, and that they tear, and take in dirt and moisture, with consequent loss. The Department of Agriculture opposed the bill on the ground that inflexible requirements should not be written into law and that the additional expense could not be justified.

Title II of the bill requires the Secretary of Agriculture to formulate and administer demonstration food stamp programs in not less than three nor more than six geographically dispersed areas, at least one of which shall be a rural area. To the extent practicable they shall be surplus labor areas. These programs would terminate by January 1, 1962. Appropriation of \$20 million is authorized to carry them out.

The Secretary is given very broad authority with respect to the types of food stamp demonstration programs to be carried out; but the committee would expect him to take cognizance of the provisions of S. 585 and S. 2098 as setting out in general the types of programs provided for by the bill. He would be expected further to provide for use of the normal channels of trade to the maximum extent practicable in carrying out such programs. It is anticipated that stamps or coupons would be distributed or sold to eligible recipients to be used by them in the purchase of food or particular kinds of food at eligible food stores. Stores could in turn redeem the coupons through designated banks. The Secretary would be required by the bill to report to Congress on the operation of these demonstration programs as soon

as practicable after their termination, so that Congress would be prepared to provide for a large scale program, should such a program become necessary.

In selecting the areas for demonstration programs, the committee felt that due consideration should be given to including at least one Indian reservation.

Section 203(c) of the bill authorizes the Secretary to use such surplus stocks of the Commodity Credit Corporation in carrying out these demonstration programs as he sees fit. These commodities would be in addition to the \$20 million authorized to be appropriated to carry out these programs.

In administering the act, the committee also felt that consideration should be given to the sale of surplus agricultural commodities to provide funds for the purchase of other commodities which might provide a more varied diet.

Benefits under the food stamp allotment programs would not be considered income for the purposes of the Social Security Act or related legislation; and assistance under such act or legislation, as well as assistance from State and local governments, would not be a basis for denying eligibility for the benefits of the food stamp allotment programs.

ESTIMATED COST

The Department of Agriculture has estimated that the additional cost of enrichment and packaging required by the bill would be about \$200,000 to \$250,000 a year. The amount authorized by the bill for the demonstration food stamp allotment programs during the entire period in which they would be carried out is \$20 million. In addition the Secretary could utilize surplus foods from Commodity Credit Corporation stocks. It is not possible to estimate the extent, if any, to which the use of such stocks under the bill would exceed their use for relief purposes if the bill were not enacted.

